



June 24, 2005

The Honorable Bill Thomas
United States House of Representatives
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Thomas:

The California Apple Commission, an organization that represents approximately five million boxes of fresh California apples, would like to take the opportunity to express its support for the Dominican Republic Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA).

Currently, the California apple industry exports nearly 25 percent of its fresh apple production. Additionally, California is the fourth largest state within the union that produces apples. As additional markets open, California apple producers continue to seek new opportunities to expand its apple exports while ensuring that it continues to produce the highest quality of apples.

DR-CAFTA eliminates tariffs currently levied on U.S. agriculture. With the elimination of these high tariffs, California apple producers will finally have an equal playing field for agricultural trade. Additionally, these new markets will assist in boosting apple exports, allowing farmers to boost state apple production and add more jobs to the golden state.

DR-CAFTA is an excellent opportunity for California and its agricultural industry. Thank you for allowing the Commission to express its support for this potentially successful program. Should you have any questions regarding the Commission's position, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex J. Ott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "J".

Alexander J. Ott
Executive Director